

GREEK REPORTER INTERVIEW OF : `ANGELIQUE ROCKAS , STRONG, BOLD and UNAFRAID` about her ground breaking multi- racial and multi-national theatre productions in the London of 1980`s by Stella Tsolakidou (Page 1 -2)

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Angelique Rockas: Strong, Bold and Unafraid

By Stella Tsolakidou on May 21, 2012 in featured, United Kingdom



Angelique Rockas is one of the few women/actresses/producers who have caused changes in the tectonic plates in the world of theatre. This year when London – apart from celebrating the sports Olympics – also celebrates artistic milestones, Greeks can celebrate the talent of Angelique Rockas, the pioneering South African born Greek actress who singlehandedly founded Internationalist Theatre, the first multi-racial and multi-national theatre company in the UK to perform great European dramatists like Brecht, Genet, Pirandello, Griselda Gambaro with multi-racial and multi-national casts.

Born in Boksburg to Greek parents who migrated to South Africa in search of a better life, Angelique (or Angeliki, meaning in Greek “heavenly messenger”) was one of the four children of her family. Angelique grew up listening to Greek myths and following Orthodox Christian traditions. She spent two years of her childhood in Peloponnese, Greece, and was taught by her family to honor her cultural heritage and learn the Greek language.

Angelique holds an Honors degree in English Literature with a major in Philosophy from Wits University, Johannesburg. She is an anti-apartheid activist and studied Acting at Cape Town University. She is multi-lingual, speaking English, Greek, Afrikaans, French, and some Italian. Her anti-apartheid and feminist activism in South Africa forced her eventually to leave the then underdeveloped and extremely conservative country in order to pursue her goals.

After finally convincing her traditionally conservative parents to study Acting at Cape Town University, Angelique left for the UK, where she began working for Greek Cypriot theatre company Theatro Technis in North London, founded to explore political and social issues that touched the Greek Cypriot community, as well as bringing to the London audience performances of great Greek tragedies and comedies.

Influenced by her experiences in South Africa, Angelique decided to broaden her horizon as an artist by creating a revolutionary theatre that broke casting clichés and racial barriers. She founded Internationalist Theatre with Athol Fugard as a patron. Multi-racial casts in classical plays were unknown territory in the UK at the time.

"Internationalist Theatre was created to break racial and cultural barriers, perform great classical plays as well as more contemporary ones that dealt with issues and situations that cut across regional, national, racial and sexist barriers performed by a company of actors and actresses from all nationalities and races; a demonstration of the harmonious collaboration of different peoples towards a common aesthetic, social and moral goal," Angelique says in an interview on Hellenism.net.



Angelique Rockas as Annabella in "Tis Pity she's a Whore"

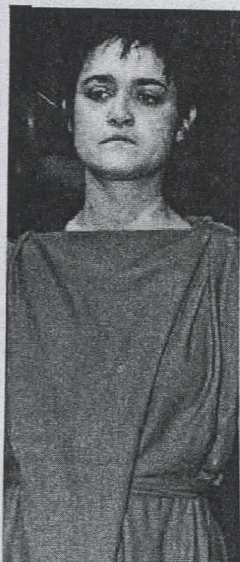
Angelique has produced "Mother Courage" by Brecht in which she also played Yvette, Griselda Gambaro's "EL CAMPO," in which she played Emma so brilliantly that it led to a 4-page feature in Vogue Mexico; Annabella in "Tis Pity She's a Whore," directed by the great Declan Donnellan; Jean Genet's "The Balcony" – the part of "Carmen." Other great classical parts include "Medea" at Theatro Technis, for which the London critics praised her fierce agility and

towering passions, and a role she was asked to repeat by Minos Volanakis at Theatro Petra; "Miss Julie" for her own company Internationalist Theatre, a production which earned the praise of being the best staging of this play ever; Miriam in Tennessee Williams' "In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel," highly praised by Lindsay Anderson; Lady Macbeth; and Tatiana in "Enemies" by Maxim Gorky.

Angelique made her film debut opposite Sean Connery in "Outland" directed by Peter Hyams, made a notable impression in Nicholas Roeg's "The Witches," opposite Anjelica Huston.

Costas Ferris cast her as Nereida in "Oh Babylon," and well known Greek film director Thodoros Maragos, famous for his groundbreaking film "Mathe Pedi mow grammata," especially wrote the part of Ms. Ortiki for Angelique in the 12 part ERT series "Emmones Idees" (Idees Fixes), a satire on consumerism and the advertising industry.

Angelique's main aim as an actress is to work with great film directors; this has led her to meetings with the great Michelangelo Antonioni, Lina Wertmuller, Francesco Rossi, all three giants of Italian cinema – not an easy feat. She even tried to arrange funding for the great Elia Kazan's last but unrealized film project.



Angelique Rockas as Medea

For her, working in theatre requires that the projects hold some honor. The great Derek Jarman asked her to participate in two of his films that failed to find funding. She works in the UK, Greece, has a Paris and USA agent, and also has a base in Eastern Europe, where there is a burgeoning film renaissance, has her own film company Contemptus Mundi Films, and has written the film script "Ayoni and Ismeta," set in the troubled Balkans.